THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) During the year 1998-99, soyabean and its products were exported to the following major countries;

Bangladesh, Belgium, Chinese Taipei, China PRP, Indonesia, Iran, Itlay, Japan, Jordan, Korea DPRP, Korea RP, Kuwait, Libya Malaysia, Mauritius, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arab, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, U.A.E., U.K., U.S.A, Venezuela, Vietnam Soc. Rep. etc.

(b) and (c) Some of the steps taken to explore the possibilities for increasing the export of soyabean and its products includes participation in International trade fairs, arranging buyer-seller meets, and sponsoring trade delegations abroad.

(d) No. specific target has been set for export of soyabean and its products. Performance of the previous year serves as a benchmark target for export of agricultural products including soyabean and its products.

Indo-Russia trade relations

1867. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to expand Indo-Russia trade relations;

(b) whether any collaboration is proposed to be established between the two countries in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (d) Yes Sir. A number of steps for expanding trade relations with the Russian Federation have been taken by the Government which include;

— promotion of dialogue with the Russian side including discussions at the highest level;

— constant review of bilateral trade through the Joint commission mechanism with its Working Groups on Trade and Economic cooperation and on Pharmaceuticals, Sub Group on Transport and Sub-Group on Banking and Financial Matters;

— facilitating through bilateral consultations, the rapid utilisation in the form of export of goods and services of debt owed to Russia;

— promotion of direct business contact through exchange of delegations, Joint Business Councils, holding of exhibitions, participation in fairs etc.

The Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation between India and Russian Federation which was signed on May 4, 1992 provides the basic framework for Indo-Russian trade and economic cooperation since the disintegration of the former USSR. The utilisation of the Russian rupee debt fund is governed by the Arrangement between the Bank For Foreign Economic Affairs of the Russian Federation and the Reserve Bank of India for implementing the provisions of the letters dated 28-29 January, 1993 and 6 September, 1993 exchanged between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of India. As per this Arrangement, the funds related to the payment of the Russian rupee debt are to be utilized for purchase of goods and services from India. Our exports to Russia are moving largely on debt repayment track as well as in a small measure, under hard currency.

Imposition of Duty Tariff on Rice imported from Pakistan

1868. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has received any representation from the All India Rice Exporters' Association (AIREA) for imposing 55 per cent duty tariff on broker rice imported from pakistan, presently at zero tariff;

(b) if so, the reasons assigned by the AIREA in favour of this demand; and

(c) the action taken/proposed to be taken thereon?

MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) AIREA has proposed an imposition of a duty of 40-50% on imported 50% and above broken rice aiming to protect the rice industry so that our brokens get a right price allowing Indian head rice prices to be competitive in the international market.